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HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Help Homeless Pets When Doing your State Taxes**

The deadline for filing taxes is just about six weeks away. When filing your Michigan tax return, the Kent County Animal Shelter (KCAS) suggests considering a contribution to the Animal Welfare Fund. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) offers grants to promote the spaying and neutering of dogs and cats. Michigan taxpayers can contribute \$5, \$10, or more to several causes, including the Animal Welfare Fund, on Form 4642, Voluntary Contributions Schedule.

"We took in nearly 7,000 lost and unwanted pets last year. The Kent County Animal Shelter has long been promoting spay/neuter of pets to control overpopulation," said Adam London, Acting Administrative Health Officer for the Kent County Health Department, which oversees the KCAS. "This is a great, easy way to contribute directly to the fund, while completing your annual tax return."

The Kent County Animal Shelter is receiving \$9,956 from the fund for programs that will start this spring. "We are honored that the state approved our grant request," London said. "We're also very proud that the state recognized and rewarded our staff's efforts to increase adoptions of homeless pets." MDARD awarded \$177,000 in grants to a total of 20 shelters for 2013. Most funding will be used to cover costs related to sterilization surgery of animals prior to adoption. Since this program began in 2009, over \$533,000 has been granted to 59 shelter projects in Michigan.

The Animal Welfare Fund supports projects that increase the number of dogs and cats that are sterilized and adopted in Michigan. Grants are awarded pursuant to the Animal Welfare Fund Act, and up to \$10,000 will be awarded to individual facilities. Animal Control Shelters and Animal Protection Shelters licensed by MDARD, and must be in good standing with the state (no compliance-related fines from MDARD in 2010 or 2011.)

Contributions to these funds will increase your tax liability or reduce your refund. Ask your tax preparer about the Voluntary Contributions Form – Form 4642, or go to [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/taxes/4642\\_406587\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/taxes/4642_406587_7.pdf) to print your own. For more information on pets, adoptions and the Kent County Animal Shelter, visit [www.accessKent.com/kcas](http://www.accessKent.com/kcas).

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and four satellite clinics located in Wyoming, Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit [www.accesskent.com/health](http://www.accesskent.com/health).

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